

## MIS SIDE PARTNER.

Antonio Pietro came to America at the urgent solicitation of his friend, Lester Ancona. When he landed in New York and hunted up the address on Bleeker street which Ancona had given him in his last letter he found that that gentleman had pulled up stakes and gone away on the very day that Pietro had sailed from Italy. He had left no address behind him and the only clue that flustered foreigner could gain as to what point of the compass his quondam friend had headed for was from the newsdealer in the next block, from whom Ancona had bought his Italian papers and his tobacco and olives, and for whom he had manifested a more sincere liking than anybody else in the world.

The newsdealer said he believed Ancona had gone west. That was decidedly an indefinite piece of information. Even an American who is pretty well acquainted with the topography of his own country would have considered it a good many variations, and to the muddy brain of poor Pietro it conveyed about as much intelligence as would be the report that the man at whose goose chase had gone on a trip through the celestial regions.

Two weeks in a down-town lodging-house exhausted Pietro's financial balance, and on the fifteenth day after he had set foot on New York soil he found himself in the little box of a room back of the newsdealer's cluttered up store, with just 1 cent on the table before him, and in his hand the gold ring his mother had given him the day she died. It was all she had to leave him, poor fellow, and he had always religiously cherished it as a talisman whose fibers of inwrought gold were vibrant with the sacred individuality of the dead woman whom he had always revered as the embodiment of all that is best in this world and the incarnation of the holiness of the world beyond.

His position was not a novel one. The newsdealer had seen many a youth in just such a plight before, but somehow the simple, hopeless misery of the young Italian appealed to a long-silent chord in his heart, and without stopping to argue the pros and cons of the plan which instantaneously outlined itself before him, he presented as salient features to Pietro who grasped them eagerly.

"When I say I don't know where Ancona went," the newsdealer explained, "I mean that I wouldn't take an oath that I could put my hand on him any moment I want him. But I've been thinking the matter over and I've come to this conclusion: He said he was going west, and when people start in that direction there is one grand central part where they all run for a month or two at least, and that's Chicago. You must go to Chicago, Pietro."

Pietro shook his head doubtfully. "I can't," he said, eyeing his one penny and the ring dubiously. "No money, no work. How much will it cost?"

"I didn't make this proposition to tantalize you with false hopes," the old man responded sharply. "When I said you must go to Chicago the statement implied that I was prepared to furnish you with the wherewithal for getting there. I like you and I pity you and want to help you. I'll pay your fare and give you money enough to keep you for a couple of weeks or so. You can also take along a letter of introduction to a friend of mine, who is pretty well acquainted in the Italian colonies, and he will make you feel as though you are not entirely forsaken and sort of brace you up and help you hunt Ancona, whom I am as positive you will find as I am that you and I are here in a Bleeker street news store to-night. All I ask in return is that you will let the best things that are in you come to the front, and give me an account of yourself every week that will let me know that my confidence in you has not been misplaced. What do you say?"

Pietro didn't say anything, but he tried a little, a thing he had not done before since leaving Italy, and his tears were a more satisfactory promise to try to keep his head above water than any verbal protestations of good faith would have been.

Pietro started for Chicago the next day. The letter of introduction to the newsdealer's friend was worth about as much as such letters usually are. The representative of Pietro's race with whom the man had come in contact were decidedly of an inferior type, and evidently he classified the young fellow who had been thus unceremoniously thrust upon his hands as one of the same species. He honored the letter with a second perusal and then handed it back to the bearer.

"I already have more proteges of me nationally than another than I know what to do with," he remarked surlily in his sleek Italian, "and I positively can be of no assistance to you. I trust you will find your friend." And Pietro who was sadly lacking in the stuff that makes men heroes, had not the courage to plead his cause, but wandered, dejectedly into the street and commenced his search unaided.

American customs bewildered him and the wretchedness of the Italian settlement into which he drifted sickened him. His money dribbled through his fingers like water through a sieve, and his second Sunday in Chicago was spent in a police station, whither he had been taken on a charge of vagrancy.

There he learned his first news of Ancona. The sergeant in charge had known him well. He had fallen in with a band of vampires on Clark street, and after first being fleeced by them he had been cajoled into joining them. But the life was new to him and he couldn't stand it. Just three weeks from the time his name was first entered on the police records he ended his career in one of the stone cells of the station house one night, and gurgling out a short prayer as a sort of peace-offering to his Maker, and all that remained to give evidence to Pietro that his friend had ever existed was a pauper's grave at Jefferson marked with a wooden slab on which the words "Lester Ancona" had been rudely carved.

Pietro wrote to the Bleeker street newsdealer and begged him to help him get back to New York, but before he mailed the letter he had been rescued from the vortex of struggling, starving humanity in which he was hopelessly floundering, and anchored in the harbor of steady employment, which assured him at least a place to sleep and three "square" meals a day, and that was luxury at that time to Pietro.

However conscientious one might be in giving each person his due, it would be quite impossible to say that the man who befriended him was actuated in so doing by unselfish motives. He thought he saw in the good-looking, confident boy an apprentice whose will could be molded by his own until he developed into just such a tool as he required in his scheming and he grasped the opportunity of becoming a model of moral stultity. He was a skillful artisan. Under his instructions, the theoretical part of which was always aptly illustrated by the corresponding practice, Pietro mastered the underlying principles of this new branch of education with a readiness that gave his employer unbounded satisfaction and which would have made a moralist quail before the evidences of latent sin which might have lain dormant in that boy's nature, had not just such circumstances combined to draw it out.

Biff Billings' business was decidedly shady. There were several branches of it, each when looked at alone appearing to be a little worse than the others. He managed a hotel, which presented as reputable a front as any other rooming house of its class in that part of the town, but there were scores of people who had put up for a time at the Billings' hotel who could tell tales of impositions and barefaced robberies perpetrated that ought to land any man behind prison bars. There was a saloon connected with the establishment. The proprietor paid the city the required license and threw people out when they got too drunk to buy any more, just as other well regulated places did, but behind that cloak of ultra-respectability there were more crooked deals hatched and consummated than any other rendezvous in town could lay claim to. People gambled there, too. Not the barrel-house contingent, but the upper crust of the gaming fraternity. It was an exceptionally safe place, for Biff Billings had lately commenced to nourish political aspirations and, though more than one person who had been authorized to protect the public and uphold morality knew the details of outrageous deeds performed there that would put more than one universally denounced dive to shame, his hand-and-glove relations with the powers that be exempted him from the inconveniences of police surveillance and his patrons came and went without fear of molestation.

In the rear of the building between the hotel above and the gaming-house below was a den about six feet high, reached by means of an outside stairway leading up from the alley, and that was let out to as many Italians as could pack themselves away in the loathsome quarters. Billings never inquired how many human bodies took refuge in the hot-bed of filth and iniquity. There was a foreman of the gang, who regularly paid the stipulated amount of the rent when due, and that was all their landlord cared for.

The manipulating of these concerns was the work into which Antonio Pietro was initiated, and so readily did he assimilate with surrounding conditions that within a month Billings declared that he couldn't run his business without him, and laughingly called him his "side partner," a sobriquet by which he soon became known to the habitués of Billings' place, and which always clung to him.

There was one infamous vocation which his master pursued with religious regularity in which Pietro declined to lend a helping hand, and that was wife-beating. But by dint of constant practice Billings had reduced that trade to a fine art, and after Pietro's first horrified refusal to put in a blow or two, whenever needed, he did not ask for his services in that line again.

Billings' wife was not a particularly good woman. It would have been contrary to all the laws of nature to expect her to walk through the fiery furnace of sin for fifteen years with Billings and his confederates and come out holding fast to much goodness. But for all her shortcomings there was a fascination in her presence that drew Pietro to her in a strange, irresistible fashion. It was not so much any distinct individuality of her own which called forth his homage as the fact that she was a woman, a representative of the same sex of which his mother stood forth as a splendid type. Pietro had not been very well tutored in some things, and those qualities which had combined to make his mother the perfection of womanhood he unconsciously ascribed to her kind in general.

Billings' wife divined his delusion and humored him in it. "I guess your mother hasn't been dead long?" she hazarded one day in her rough Italian, which she had picked up from one source or another. It was the first direct question she had asked him concerning his past life, and that was called forth by the tender, half-reverential way, in which he involuntarily laid his hand on her right cheek over the gash which Billings had made that morning.

"A year," he said, filling up in a way he had of doing at times when the thought of the trial was brought directly before him. He sat down opposite her at the table, and while he drank his black coffee he turned autobiographer.

"She was the best mother," he said trying to bring in a word of English whenever he could, to make his meaning more easily comprehended. "This is a mighty hard place to get along in without a mother. Folks don't seem to care much for anybody but themselves. That is, the most of them," he added remembering the Bleeker street newsdealer, of whose generosity he gave a detailed account.

"I haven't written to him since I've been with your husband," he said. "I'm ashamed to. I wouldn't dare tell him the truth, for you know this business is not what it ought to be. I left my mother's ring with him. I could get it for the asking, but I don't want to touch it while my hands are so stained with dirty work. It would be sacrilege. I'll try to get out of here by and by."

Billings' wife did not sneer at the simple confession as she would have done at one time.

"I know how you feel," she answered, "but you must write. When a man does for you what he did, he is prompt-

ed by an unusual interest in you, and a bad report will be better than no news."

Pietro saw the justice of her argument and allowed himself to be guided by her counsel, but in the letter that was forthcoming he did not ask for the gold ring.

Day by day the friendship between Billings' wife and his side partner was strengthened. "I had a boy once of my own," she told Pietro. "If he had lived he would have been just your age. Somehow you kind of take up the place in my heart, which I used to think he would fill. You're a new conscience for me. You may call me 'mother' if you like."

And Pietro did. If he was conscience for her, her apparently rough personality took on the same subtle essence in regard to himself. Pleasant though he was outwardly to the dictates of his commander, the boy's soul continually rebelled against acts of grossness and injustice in which he was compelled to take part. Up to a certain point there was a strange fascination in the life he led, but beyond that limit his better self asserted itself and cried out for release from such bondage. At those times he vowed he would leave and lead a clean life, or sink honorably in the attempt, and daily Billings' wife sought to strengthen that resolve and urged him to exercise his higher nature and begin life again. But months came and went, and still Pietro was known on the levee and in the adjoining alleys as Billings' "side-partner."

One day he got a letter from the Bleeker street news dealer. "I shall send you by express your gold ring," he said. "May I speak to you more fervently than tongue or pen of an old man can do?"

Pietro took a decided stand that night. "I'm going to leave you to-morrow," he said abruptly, when Billings came up stairs for supper.

Billings' black eyes blazed up with sudden anger. "And what for?" he asked, pushing his wife back in the corner and confronting the young fellow, who had dared to make an assertion on his own account on a subject in which Billings' interests were so deeply involved.

All the boy's courage was aroused for instant action. "Because I'm tired of all this and because I want to lead a decent life, which I can never do here—that's why."

He looked at his employer unflinchingly. Billings hesitated before answering.

"You idiot," he cried at length, "do you think I've taken you in hand and let you into all my secrets and trained you and made you what I have, only to let you come or go at your own sweet will? No, you're mine, body and soul. If I say 'stay,' stay you do. And that's what I do say. Leave if you dare."

His wife stepped toward him. "Don't drag him down any further, Biff," she pleaded.

"So it's you who have been putting him up to such tricks," he interrupted with a sneer. "I might have known I couldn't trust you."

He seized her shoulder roughly but before he could perpetrate any further violence, Pietro whose arm was nerved with his newly made resolution to do right at all hazards, loosened the man's grasp and drew her toward him. "It's not her fault," he said. "It's all my own doings. I'm sick of sin, I tell you."

In his rage Billings struck out wildly before him. Perhaps the blow was meant for his wife, perhaps for Pietro, perhaps it was merely a purposeless expression of wrath, but its full force descended upon Pietro, who reeled back against the table and lay there stunned and bleeding.

He died two days later. "Concussion of the brain, the result of a heavy fall," was what the doctor reported to the health department. He knew the main facts of the case, as did a score of others, but Billings held the reins of his popularity as firmly as ever and no action was taken against him.

Billings kept up his reputation by giving his side partner a great funeral. The woman who had gathered the young man into her heart took the ring which came the day of the funeral and put it on his finger.

"What's that?" her husband asked, coming in while she performed the loving service and catching a glimpse of the gleaming gold.

"It was his mother's," she cried, laying her hand over the precious circlet. "Don't you dare pollute it with your touch."

Billings grunted and turned away.

## COTTON PODS.

### A Southern Woman Making Money Out of an English Fleeter's Idea.

A young woman from South Carolina has been paying a long holiday visit to New York, all the expenses of which have been defrayed from the outcome of a trifling incident which occurred to her two years ago. At that time her sister was at school in England, and, thinking that the absent sister might like to see something of home, she sent her a card-board box containing a couple of twigs of half-opened cotton pods. These were seen by a London florist of ideas, who found out what they were and where they came from, and then commissioned the schoolgirl to write to her sister, making the offer of a very nice price for any number of such sprays delivered to him in good condition, to be used for decorative purposes.

The proposition was accepted, and for two seasons now the young woman has sent over each year three big packing-boxes of prime pods, bought cheap from her father's plantation. It rather dashed her good spirits when she learned that the "decorative purposes" for which the half-opened pods were to be used should really have read mortuary purposes, the shrewd florist having conceived the idea that, tied up in white or pale mauve ribbon, they would form a very pretty emblem for departed buds and other young persons. But the draft that accompanied the revelation was so handsome that it considerably modified the shock, and, as has been said, one of the results has been a net pleasure visit to New York on the net profits from this odd transaction in South Carolina cotton pods.—New York Sun.

Matrimony is the name of a postoffice in North Carolina. Casco, Me., has a twelve-year-old girl who weighs 225 pounds.

Accept None of the Pretended Substitutes for

## Royal Baking Powder

BECAUSE inferior and cheaper made baking preparations are bought at wholesale at a price so much lower than ROYAL, some grocers are urging consumers to use them in place of the ROYAL at the same retail price.

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Elderly Party.—I guess he didn't amount to much.

Brown.—What makes you think so? Elderly Party.—Well, if he'd been in the Volunteer Fire Department would n't I have known it.

Indignant Citizen.—Me. move on? What for?

Apparition.—Sh-h-h—don't make a row. I'm only carrying out my orders; I'm a reporter on the Daily Spasm, and I'm doing a column article to be called "A Day on the Force."

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It is the disregard of the earlier indications of ill health which leads to the establishment of all sorts of maladies on a chronic basis. Moreover, there are certain disorders incident to the season, such as malaria and rheumatism, against which it is always desirable to fortify the system after exposure to the conditions which produce them. Cold, damp and miasmata are surely counteracted by Hostetter's Stomach Bitters. After you have incurred risk from these influences, a winglassful of Hostetter's Stomach Bitters directly afterward should be swallowed. For malaria, dyspepsia, liver complaint, kidney and bladder trouble, nervousness and debility it is the most deservedly popular of remedies and preventives. A winglassful before meals promotes appetite.

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F. J. CHENEY & CO., Toledo, O. Sold by Druggists, 75c. Hall's Family Pills, 25c.

Friend.—How is business? Merchant.—Bad; very bad. "Pretty dull, eh?"

"Never saw it so dull. There hasn't been a day for two months that I didn't have full ten minutes to spare for luncheon."

DROUGHT PROOF FIELD CORN. Here is something new. Despite 110 days without a drop of rain, Salzer's new Yellow Dent corn yielded on a large acreage over sixty-eight bushels per acre, while the department of agriculture reports the average yield on corn but a trifle over twenty bushels per acre in the United States. Now think of the possibilities of this corn in a good corn season! It will go double this yield then or 136 bu.

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First Bunco Man.—It cuts me to the heart to read an item like that.

Second Bunco Man.—What is it?

First Bunco Man.—"A guest at the Hotel Topica was found suffocated yesterday morning. He had blown out the gas."

The Queen of the Belgians is a clever conjuror, and the king never reaches for his hat without a suspicious fear that she may have got a globe of fish hidden away in it.

McKenzie Bowele is the new Canadian Premier. He is an Englishman, 71 years old, has had a long experience as Minister of Customs, and is a protectionist.

I could not get along without Piso's Cure for Consumption. It always cures.—Mrs. E. C. Moulton, Needham, Mass., Oct. 22, '94.

The United States contains 4,564,641 farms.

"Hanson's Magic Corn Salve." Warranted to cure or money refunded. Ask your druggist for it. Price 15 cents.

The German Empire begins 1895 with a population of 81½ million souls, taking round figures. When the Franco-Prussian War broke out in 1870 Germany only mustered some 40 million inhabitants.

Hegeman's Camphor Ice with Glycerine. Cures Chapped Hands and Face, Tender or Sore Feet, Chills, Piles, Etc. C. G. Clark Co., New Haven, Ct.

Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Maddock, of Sydney, have recently taken a 600-mile bicycle tour through the rough and tumble roads, tracks, swamps and bad lands of Australia, covering the distance in nine days.

If the Baby is Cutting Teeth. Be sure and use that old and well-tried remedy, Maw's WASSLOW'S SOOTHING SYRUP for Children Teething.

Washington was the victim of merciless political attacks when he was President. General Gates once alluded to him as that "dark, designing, sordid, ambitious, vain, proud arrogant and vindictive knave."

The Highwayman generally draws your watch on demand.

A SURGEON'S KNIFE gives you a feeling of horror and dread. There is no longer necessity for its use in many diseases formerly regarded as incurable without cutting. The Triumph of Conservative Surgery is well illustrated by the fact that RUPTURE or Breach is now radically cured without the knife and without pain. Clumsy operations with the knife are a source of trouble and often induce inflammation, strangulation and death.

TUMORS Ovarian, Fibroid (Uterine) and many others, are now removed without the perils of cutting operations.

PILE TUMORS, however large, are also removed without the perils of the knife and other diseases of the lower bowel, are permanently cured without pain or resort to the knife.

STONE in the Bladder, no matter how large, is crushed, pulverized, washed out and perfectly removed without cutting.

STRICTURE of Urinary Passage is cured in hundreds of cases. For pamphlet, references and all particulars, send 1 cent (in stamps) to World's Dispensary Medical Association, 665 Main Street, Buffalo, N. Y.

MOTHERS and those soon to become mothers, should know that Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription robs childbirth of its terrors, and dangers to both mother and child, by aiding nature in preparing the system for parturition. Thereby "labor" and the period of confinement are greatly shortened. It also promotes the secretion of an abundance of nourishment for the child.

Mrs. DORA A. GUTHRIE, of Oakley, Oregon Co., Tenn., writes: "When I began taking Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription, I was not able to stand on my feet without suffering almost death. Now I do all my housework, washing, cooking, sewing and everything for my family of eight. I am stouter now than I have been in six years. Your 'Favorite Prescription' is the best to take before confinement, or at least it proved so with me. I never suffered so little with any of my children as I did with my last."

W. L. DOUGLAS \$3 SHOE IS THE BEST. FIT FOR A KING. J. S. CORDOVAN, 35, CORDOVAN, 143 3/4 FINE CALF & KIDNEY \$3.49 POLICE, 3 SOLES. \$2.92. WORKINGMEN'S EXTRA FINE. \$2.49. BOYS SCHOOL SHOES. LADIES' \$3.29. \$2.17. BEST DRESS. SEND FOR CATALOGUE. W. L. DOUGLAS, BROOKLYN, N. Y.

Over One Million People wear the W. L. Douglas \$3 & \$4 Shoes. All our shoes are equally satisfactory. They give the best value for the money. They equal custom shoes in style and fit. Their wearing qualities are unsurpassed. The prices are uniform—no stamped on shoes. From \$1 to \$5 saved over other makes. If your shoe dealer does not sell W. L. DOUGLAS, write to us.

W. N. U., Wichita.—Vol. 8, No. 8. When Answering Advertisements, Please Mention This Paper.

The chief engineer of the Croton Aqueduct reports that twenty million gallons of water are wasted in New York every day. Thus do we arrive at the fact that men, as a rule, neglect the water which the bar-tender pours out for them.

Little Johnny—I prayed for good skating, and we got plenty of ice, but it has snowed just enough to spoil it. Little Ethel—That's too bad. Little Johnny—It's an outrage. I'm gold' over to the coastin' hill to lick the boy that prayed for snow.

The big sleeves which fashion decrees as the only wear for women are intruding themselves into the wrong place, a Topeka amateur actress having refused to play "Lady Macbeth" unless she could have balloon sleeves in her sleep-walking gown.

"If more care is not taken," exclaims an excited contemporary, "somebody will break into our State's prison and steal everything of value." We ought not to confine things of value in our State's prisons. They are not built for that purpose, we believe.

Montana's gold output in 1894, was \$4,500,000.

The icemen about Niagara Falls are rejoicing over the excellent ice crop, which is said to be the best in 35 years.

Land in New York city has been sold at a price equal to \$8,000,000 an acre. The highest in London at \$5,000,000 an acre.

What lots of womanly pleasure Queen Victoria has missed. She has never been out shopping since the death of the Prince Consort.

Will the coming woman fight and wrestle? The dry goods clerks say she will, judging by the training she is getting in bargain counter crushing matches.

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